

73
~~Top Secret~~

~~NOFORN NOCONTRACT~~

YUGOSLAVIA: Showdown in Kosovo Province

Protesting ethnic Albanians from Kosovo Province and provincial leaders were unable to reach an accommodation over the weekend, raising prospects for repressive measures. [REDACTED]

After a tense day of negotiations yesterday, some 1,300 striking Albanian miners refused to accept the terms offered by the Kosovo leadership and said they would continue their protests. The miners are demanding written confirmation of the resignation of key Kosovo officials, including Serbian-backed provincial party leader Morina. Some 40,000 Albanian protesters in support of the miners have virtually closed down many towns in Kosovo. [REDACTED]

The Yugoslav collective presidency announced on Saturday it had sent an unspecified number of new federal security police to Kosovo and reiterated threats of military intervention. Ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo have appealed to Belgrade to deploy troops against demonstrators to end the protests. Unsubstantiated Western media reports indicate armored personnel carriers and tanks are outside Pristina, the provincial capital; there are no reports of violence. [REDACTED]

Federal leaders are backing the Serbian position that protesters are playing into the hands of Albanian nationalists and separatists. Statements from more liberal Slovenia and Croatia are supporting the protesters and calling for restraint. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The miners and local authorities may still come to terms soon. It nonetheless seems likely, should the protests continue, that officials may impose repressive measures, which could lead to violence. These steps might include curfews, bans on meetings, and jailings of strike leaders. Although military force would be used only as a last resort, officials probably hope the heightened visibility of tanks and other equipment will intimidate protesters. [REDACTED]

Slovenia's and Croatia's statements in support of the Albanians will further aggravate their strains with Serbia. A crackdown on the demonstrators would lead to further charges of human rights abuses, increasing Albanian grievances and fueling instability. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Handle via TALENT [REDACTED]

~~Top Secret~~
27 February 1989

3 0 6 5